

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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E.O. 11653: N/A

TAGS: EEC, UK

SUBJECT: INITIAL UK REACTION TO TINDEMANS' REPORT

1. FIRST BRITISH REACTIONS TO TINDEMANS' PROPOSALS ARE GENERALLY POSITIVE BUT CAUTIOUS, REFLECTING THE CONTINUING SCEPTICISM HERE ABOUT THE PRESENT DESIRABILITY AND CAPACITY FOR FURTHER EUROPEAN INTEGRATION.

2. GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ARE CALLING THE REPORT "REASONABLE," "PRAGMATIC" AND "A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION." THEY SAY THE UK WILL BE READY TO DISCUSS ALL THE ISSUES PUT FORWARD BY TINDEMANS AS SOON AS MINISTERS HAVE DISCUSSED THEM AND FORMULATED POSITIONS. HOWEVER, EVEN THOUGH FEW OF THE PROPOSALS ARE NEW,

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NO OFFICIALS ARE MAKING SUBSTANTIVE COMMENTS ON THE

VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF THE PACKAGE. THE INITIAL GOVERNMENT POSTURE IS CLEARLY ONE OF BEING NON-COMMITTAL ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE ISSUES. THERE HAVE BEEN SUGGESTIONS THAT NO AUTHORITATIVE REACTION SHOULD BE EXPECTED UNTIL CALLAGHAN MAKES A MAJOR SPEECH IN ABOUT THREE WEEKS.

3. THE REPORT MADE FRONT PAGE HEADLINES IN ALMOST ALL MAJOR PAPERS: "TWO-SPEED PLAN FOR EEC," "TINDEMANS BACKS TWO-TIERS PROGRESS TO EUROPEAN UNION" AND "UNITE OR COLLAPSE, EUROPE TOLD." TREATMENT HAS BEEN GENERALLY THOROUGH AND LOW-KEY. THERE WERE LEAD EDITORIALS IN QUALITY PAPERS AND ALL PRAISED THE REPORT, NOT AS A PIECE OF ORIGINAL THINKING BUT AS A SENSIBLE DOCUMENT THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR THE TIMES. IT SETS OUT ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE COMING EUROPEAN DEBATE THAT MUST PRECEDE ANY CONSENSUS ON WHERE THE NINE GO FROM HERE.

RICHARDSON

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